the Bajrang Dal on the 16th March, 2002, and vandalising the premises, damaging the properties and hurting the security personnel and employees of the Orissa Legislative Assembly Secretariat thereby amounting to a direct attack on democracy itself. This House condemns the incident in unequivocal terms and recommends stern and deterrent action against the guilty persons."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : Now, Mr. Jaswant Singh, to make a statement on the recently-concluded Commonwealth Governments' Summit in Australia.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

Recently concluded Common Wealth Summit in Australia

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to inform the hon. Members about the recent CHOGM, 2002, at Coolum in Australia. I had the honour to represent the hon. Prime Minister at this Conference - the first Commonwealth Summit in the 21st Century.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Coolum from March 2nd to 5th, 2002, chaired by the Prime Minister of Australia. The opening ceremony was addressed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth. The Heads of Government adopted the Commonwealth Coolum Declaration and a separate statement attached to the Declaration on Zimbabwe as well as the Coolum Communique.

The Communique takes into account our major concerns, notably on terrorism and development. The Heads of Government reiterated their total condemnation of all acts of terrorism "in whatever form or wherever they occur or by whomsoever perpetrated", adding that there is "no justification for terrorism". Similarly, on multilateral trade issues, where a consensus is usually elusive, India was able to ensure that the language on WTO-related issues faithfully reflects the outcome at Doha and is supportive of the development agenda.

The Coolum CHOGM also considered the issue of Zimbabwe. The discussions in the restricted Retreat indicated different views on this matter, a consensus being in favour of postponing action until after the receipt of the report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on the Presidential elections. At the same time, the Commonwealth leaders were not in favour of any dilution of its principles in support of democracy.

The CHOGM statement on Zimbabwe, agreed to determine appropriate action on Zimbabwe, in the event that the Commonwealth Observer Group reported adversely. This consensus, in fact, emerged after India suggested closure of the debate urging that this issue should not further divide the Commonwealth on ethnic and racial lines.

One of the significant achievements at the Conference was the unanimous recommendation that India should be invited to join CMAG (the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group). As mentioned in the Coolum communique, India would become a member of the CMAG with immediate effect until the next CHOGM, along with Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Botswana, Malta, Nigeria and Samoa. At the last meeting of the CMAG, endorsed by this CHOGM, Heads of Government agreed that Pakistan's suspension from the Councils of Commonwealth should remain unchanged pending the restoration of a democratic Government. On Fiji, Heads of Government took note of the progress made in the restoration of democracy and endorsed CMAG's decision to lift Fiji's suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth. However, in recognition of the ongoing legal proceedings over the constitutionality of the Government of Fiji, it was agreed that CMAG should keep Fiji on its agenda.

The President of Nigeria having offered to host the next CHOGM, the next Summit will be held in Nigeria in 2003.

The outcome of the Conference has been entirely satisfactory from our perspective. The Coolum Declaration will help to advance the development agenda, while its robust stand on terrorism entirely takes into account our concerns. Our membership of CMAG over the next four years reinforces the strong position of India within the Commonwealth.

Sir, with your permission, I would like to inform the hon. Members that the clarifications could, perhaps, be sought on Friday, and I will happily answer them. Thank you.